

Littledown School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110188
Local Authority	Slough
Inspection number	337445
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2010
Reporting inspector	James Bowden

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Beaver
Headteacher	Jo Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The majority of his time was spent looking at learning. He visited eight lessons, seeing all four teachers twice. Meetings were held with the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body, the governor with delegated responsibility for safeguarding and formal discussions with older pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at teachers' planning and assessment. He analysed 15 parents' and carers' questionnaires, 14 pupils' questionnaires and 15 responses from staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of pupils over time
- how well teaching challenges all pupils and the quality of progress they make in lessons
- the quality of leadership and management of the curriculum
- attendance data over the past three years
- the impact of the school's work in supporting pupils with behavioural difficulties across the local authority.

Information about the school

The school continues to provide for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. However, its remit has been broadened since the appointment of the new headteacher and a permanent senior management team after the last inspection. On appointment, the headteacher was charged with developing a continuum of provision and support for primary-aged pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties across the local authority. As a result, the school now provides:

- 16 full-time places for Key Stage 2 pupils
- five nurture places for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils, which are dual-registered places with mainstream schools and, on occasion, this may also include children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- three full-time places for pupils who are permanently excluded or at serious risk of exclusion from a mainstream school
- an outreach team providing intensive support and training to mainstream schools
- primary pupil training courses (PPTC) for up to 12 children at a time for six weeks at a second site some 0.5 miles away
- a behaviour panel for admissions and the monitoring of pupils across the authority

Currently, almost all pupils are boys. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most have a statement of special educational needs, mainly for their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, with a few for autistic spectrum disorder needs. Almost all are of White heritage, which does not reflect the ethnic profile of the local authority. There is a high turnover of pupils throughout the year. The proportion, excluding dual-registered pupils, known to be eligible for school meals is very high at 82%. The school achieved Healthy Schools status at the start of May 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Littledown is a good school. It provides a good quality education and meets successfully its core aim of supporting pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in gaining the greatest possible access to learning and achievement in preparation for the responsibilities and experiences of life. The school's impact is enhanced greatly by the extra provision and support it offers as part of its broader remit. There have been no primary pupils permanently excluded this year across the local authority and fixed-term exclusions are very much reduced, including in the school itself.

Underpinning the work of the school is the ambition, drive and highly effective leadership of the headteacher. In addition, rigorous and accurate self-evaluation has led to significant improvements since the last inspection and has resulted in clearly-focused planning, which has identified key areas for improvement. The dedicated staff team contributes highly to this ethos of improvement. As a result, the school is exceptionally well placed to sustain further improvement and build further on its improving track record.

The school works very closely with parents and carers. A very strong culture of communication and collaboration between home and school keeps them very well informed of their child's progress. The appointment of a 'Think' family worker has also proved to be particularly beneficial in supporting parents and carers. The overwhelming majority are highly appreciative of the school's work. One parent, expressing the views of many, noted, 'Littledown has helped my child not just on educational needs but emotional too. I think the school has been a godsend to my child, and has helped us too.'

Pupils achieve well because of the total education and support package offered. Because of their behavioural and social difficulties, many have had a poor attendance record and a negative experience of mainstream school. Consequently, when they start at Littledown, their attainment is often well below that of their mainstream peers. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, many have made good progress in relation to their starting points and some have been reintegrated into mainstream school. Others move on to appropriate specialist provision. Pupils report that the school is a very safe place to learn. They eat very healthily and participate in a wide range of physical activities.

Teaching is good and pupils make good progress in lessons. Although individual achievement folders are annotated carefully, there are inconsistencies in the identification of specific levels of attainment in all subjects. Pupils are not always aware of how well they are doing in relation to age-related National Curriculum expectations

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across all subjects. The good curriculum underpins the school's focus on literacy and numeracy and matches that taught in mainstream schools. This eases reintegration and transition to mainstream or special schools when pupils leave. The leadership has recognised that there could be more opportunities provided to improve pupils' work-related learning. A significant strength of the school is the outstanding care, guidance and specific support pupils receive. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. Strong partnerships with other professionals and schools contribute very well to the progress pupils make. Although information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively to support teaching and enliven learning, the leadership recognises that the use of ICT could be broadened in order to support further its specialist training work and links with educational and other partnerships. The school is outstanding in ensuring all pupils have equality of opportunity. In light of the ambition and strong drive for improvement, the greatly improved track record in relation to pupils' progress and the very positive impact of the other newly introduced initiatives, the school has an excellent capacity to improve even further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all pupils know how well they are making progress in all subjects in relation to the age-related levels of attainment of the National Curriculum.
- Develop vocational learning opportunities and links with local businesses to improve pupils' understanding of the world of work
- Broaden the use of new technologies to add new dimensions to:
 - the school's specialist training work
 - the school's partnership arrangements.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy learning, which was clearly evident in lessons where they were actively involved in either 'making' or 'doing'. As a result of the calm and sensitive support from all adults in the classroom, they persevere very well and show a pride in their work. One pupil was particularly keen to show the inspector how well he felt his handwriting had improved. All are aware of their individual targets, which are on their desks, and make good progress towards these. Although there are occasional outbursts, older pupils are aware of the 'triggers' that lead to this response and what they must then do to control their behaviour, such as opting to use a 'quiet room' for a short time while they calm down. During the inspection, the learning of other pupils in lessons was not interrupted by any untoward disruptive behaviour. Pupils' rekindled interest in learning is reflected in the increasing numbers re-integrated into mainstream schools.

Pupils are confident in approaching adults for help. If there were any incidents of bullying, they felt the school would deal effectively with them. Pupils are very aware of safety in relation to the use of the internet. As well as being enabled to eat very healthily and understand the importance of this, pupils, including those on the primary

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pupil training courses, participate in a wide range of physical activities.

Although the primary pupil training courses programme was not running at the time of this inspection, primary headteachers report they are pleased with the impact it has on pupils' personal development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together and manage behaviour particularly well, which enables all pupils to make good progress. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, all made progress in their knowledge and understanding of percentages and fractions, as well as how to apply these when mixing ingredients for making cakes. Planning meets pupils' needs well, for example for those pupils with autistic spectrum disorder who need a more structured approach to learning. As a result of this provision, one pupil had the confidence to ask the inspector to visit his one-to-one lesson. Progress is particularly good in the daily literacy sessions where all pupils follow a structured programme. This supports well their learning in other subjects. Although marking is consistent and informs pupils of how well they are doing, comments about what the

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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pupils should do to improve are not always followed up effectively. Praise is used wisely and is not overly effusive, success being rewarded appropriately in line with the school's policy.

Daily structured programmes focusing on literacy and numeracy underpin the school's good curricular provision. In addition, the curriculum is effective in supporting pupils' overall personal development, including aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Enrichment activities include themed days and activities, some of which are linked with mainstream schools, that contribute well to pupils' progress and enjoyment. A creative partnership in the community has led to pupils' successful engagement in an animation project to enliven learning.

Pupils' health, safety and well-being are at the forefront of the school's outstanding ethos of care. School procedures for reducing absence have resulted in there being no persistent absentees and much-improved attendance overall. Nurture provision includes regular home visits, the provision of toy boxes and discussions about effective behaviour strategies with both parents and carers and mainstream teachers. The school has excellent support arrangements for transition and integration/re-integration programmes for pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Underpinning the headteacher's excellent leadership of the school's full remit is the highly effective day-to-day leadership and management of the school by the deputy headteacher. Staff feel valued and their professional development now has a high priority. A particular strength is that the school takes responsibility for collecting pupils from their homes and returning them in the evenings. This ensures daily contact with parents and carers and strengthens communication and parental engagement in, and support for, their child's education. The school is highly effective in ensuring all pupils have equality of opportunity, as it is in tackling racial discrimination, which results in a strong ethos of inclusion.

The governing body is effective in challenging and supporting the school's drive for sustained improvement. It also works closely with senior leadership to ensure safeguarding and child protection procedures are of the highest quality. The school's contribution to promoting community cohesion is strong within its own community and the local community. This is as a result of effective curriculum planning, with its good

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impact on pupils' personal development, and the extensive range of community initiatives and partnerships. The leadership has plans in place to ensure its contribution to community cohesion extends to the wider community beyond the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are very pleased with the school's provision. They believe the school keeps their children safe, keeps them well informed of the progress their children make and that teaching is good. This inspection confirms their views. A few thought that the school did not do enough to help them support their children's learning. Evidence suggested that the school did all it could in this respect and involved parents and carers fully in the education of their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Littledown school to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 15 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 16 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	6	40	7	47	1	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	80	3	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	73	4	27	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	47	8	53	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	73	4	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	53	5	33	2	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	53	6	40	1	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	67	3	20	1	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	67	5	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	67	4	27	1	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	47	7	47	1	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	67	4	27	1	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	73	4	27	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Littledown School, Slough SL1 3QW

I recently came to the school to see how well you are getting on and whether I could suggest anything to make things better. I was really impressed by the way all of you welcomed me in to your lessons. I enjoyed meeting you and being able to have a formal chat with some of you. It was good to hear how well you thought you were getting on and how some of you were now looking forward to moving on to secondary school. I have decided your school is good because:

- the headteacher and the deputy headteacher lead the school very well and have plans to keep making things even better for you
- many of you are improving your behaviour
- you make good progress in your learning and personal development
- all the staff care for you really well and make sure you are safe
- in lessons, teachers and other adults give you all the help and support they can
- the school makes sure there are lots of exciting things for you to do
- the school prepares you well for the next stage of your education.

I think the school could improve further and have asked the school leaders to:

- make sure you understand how well you are doing compared with other pupils of your age in mainstream schools
- provide more opportunities for you to understand and experience the world of work
- use ICT even more to support the school's work.

Yours sincerely

James Bowden

Lead inspector

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